

FILED IN THE  
U.S. DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON

Sep 21, 2020

SEAN F. McAVOY, CLERK

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON

CHRISTOPHER J. HALL,

Petitioner,

v.

STATE OF WASHINGTON,

Respondent.

NO. 2:20-CV-00263-SAB

**ORDER SUMMARILY  
DISMISSING HABEAS  
PETITION**

Petitioner, a prisoner at the Coyote Ridge Corrections Center, brings this *pro se* Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus by a Person in State Custody pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2254. The \$5.00 filing fee has been paid.

**PROPER RESPONDENT**

An initial defect with the Petition is that it fails to name a proper party as a respondent. The proper respondent in a federal petition seeking habeas corpus relief is the person having custody of the petitioner. *Rumsfeld v. Padilla*, 542 U.S. 426 (2004); *Stanley v. Cal. Supreme Court*, 21 F.3d 359, 360 (9th Cir. 1994). If the petitioner is incarcerated, the proper respondent is generally the warden of the institution where the petitioner is incarcerated. *See Ortiz-Sandoval v. Gomez*, 81 F.3d 891 (9th Cir. 1996). Failure to name a proper respondent deprives federal courts of personal jurisdiction. *See Stanley*, 21 F.3d at 360. While Petitioner could

**ORDER SUMMARILY DISMISSING HABEAS PETITION -- 1**

1 conceivably remedy this issue, the Court finds the additional deficiencies discussed  
2 below would make amendment futile.

### 3 EXHAUSTION REQUIREMENT

4 Petitioner challenges his 2007 Spokane County plea of guilty to Second  
5 Degree Murder. He was sentenced to 340 months' incarceration. Petitioner  
6 indicates that he did not appeal his conviction and sentence. ECF No. 1 at 2.

7 In his grounds for relief, Petitioner argues that the State of Washington has  
8 no jurisdiction to decide federal constitutional matters. ECF No. 1 at 5-12. It has  
9 long been settled that state courts are competent to decide questions arising under  
10 the U.S. Constitution. *See Baker v. Grice*, 169 U.S. 284, 291 (1898) ("It is the duty  
11 of the state court, as much as it is that of the federal courts, when the question of  
12 the validity of a state statute is necessarily involved, as being in alleged violation  
13 of any provision of the federal constitution, to decide that question, and to hold the  
14 law void if it violate that instrument."); *see also Worldwide Church of God v.*  
15 *McNair*, 805 F.2d 888, 891 (9th Cir. 1986) (holding that state courts are as  
16 competent as federal courts to decide federal constitutional matters). Therefore,  
17 Petitioner's arguments to the contrary lack merit.

18 Additionally, before a federal court may grant habeas relief to a state  
19 prisoner, the prisoner must exhaust the state court remedies available to him. 28  
20 U.S.C. § 2254(b); *Baldwin v. Reese*, 541 U.S. 27 (2004). Exhaustion generally  
21 requires that a prisoner give the state courts an opportunity to act on his claims  
22 before he presents those claims to a federal court. *O'Sullivan v. Boerckel*, 526 U.S.  
23 838 (1999). A petitioner has not exhausted a claim for relief so long as the  
24 petitioner has a right under state law to raise the claim by available procedure. *See*  
25 *Id.*; 28 U.S.C. § 2254(c).

26 To meet the exhaustion requirement, the petitioner must have "fairly  
27 present[ed] his claim in each appropriate state court (including a state supreme  
28 court with powers of discretionary review), thereby alerting that court to the

1 federal nature of the claim.” *Baldwin*, 541 U.S. at 29; *see also Duncan v. Henry*,  
2 513 U.S. 364, 365–66 (1995). A petitioner fairly presents a claim to the state court  
3 by describing the factual or legal bases for that claim and by alerting the state court  
4 “to the fact that the ... [petitioner is] asserting claims under the United States  
5 Constitution.” *Duncan*, 513 U.S. at 365–366; *see also Tamalini v. Stewart*, 249  
6 F.3d 895, 898 (9th Cir. 2001) (same). Mere similarity between a claim raised in  
7 state court and a claim in a federal habeas petition is insufficient. *Duncan*, 513  
8 U.S. at 365–66.

9 Furthermore, to fairly present a claim, the petitioner “must give the state  
10 courts one full opportunity to resolve any constitutional issues by invoking one  
11 complete round of the State's established appellate review process.” *O'Sullivan*,  
12 526 U.S. at 845. Once a federal claim has been fairly presented to the state courts,  
13 the exhaustion requirement is satisfied. *See Picard v. Connor*, 404 U.S. 270, 275  
14 (1971). It appears from the face of the Petition and subsequent documents that  
15 Petitioner has not exhausted his state court remedies as to each of his grounds for  
16 relief. Indeed, Petitioner affirmatively represents that he did not exhaust his state  
17 court remedies.

### 18 **GROUND FOR FEDERAL HABEAS RELIEF**

19 Petitioner asserts that the Washington state constitution contradicts the  
20 federal constitution regarding the Fifth Amendment right to “presentment or  
21 indictment of a Grand Jury.” ECF No. 1 at 5. He claims “no bill of indictment” was  
22 brought against him rendering his arrest, conviction, and imprisonment illegal. *Id.*

23 Petitioner seems to argue that because the state courts have defied “federally  
24 established procedures and processes for the adjudication of crimes” only “a court  
25 of federal jurisdiction” has jurisdictional authority over his claims. *Id.* at 10. His  
26 bald assertion that “due process of the law was ignored” is unsupported by his  
27 factual allegations.

28 The United States Supreme Court stated long ago: “Prosecution by

1 information instead of by indictment is provided for by the laws of Washington.  
2 This is not a violation of the Federal Constitution.” *See Gaines v. Washington*, 277  
3 U.S. 81, 86 (1928). Consequently, Petitioner’s assertions to the contrary presented  
4 in his four grounds for federal habeas relief are legally frivolous.

5 Because it plainly appears from the petition and accompanying documents  
6 that Petitioner is not entitled to relief in this Court, **IT IS ORDERED** the petition,  
7 ECF No. 1, is **DISMISSED** pursuant to Rule 4, Rules Governing Section 2254  
8 Cases in the United States District Courts. **IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that all  
9 pending Motions, if any, are **DENIED as moot**.

10 **IT IS SO ORDERED.** The Clerk of Court is directed to enter this Order,  
11 enter judgment, provide copies to Petitioner, and **close** the file. The Court certifies  
12 that pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(3), an appeal from this decision could not be  
13 taken in good faith, and there is no basis upon which to issue a certificate of  
14 appealability. 28 U.S.C. § 2253(c); Fed. R. App. P. 22(b). A certificate of  
15 appealability is therefore **DENIED**.

16 **DATED** this 21st day of September 2020.



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A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stanley A. Bastian". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line underneath it.

Stanley A. Bastian  
Chief United States District Judge